United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1493
6 October 1993

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in resolution adopted last night, establishes United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNOMIR) for initial six months to assist in implementation of Arusha Peace Agreement; existing observer mission to be integrated into UNOMIR.

+ Rwanda, Thailand, Marshall Islands, Bahrain, Czech Republic, Singapore, Bhutan and Brunei Darussalam among speakers today in General Assembly's general debate.

+ Guatemala, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Kenya and Turkmenistan among speakers in yesterday's general debate.

+ Secretary-General tells Security Council that security is prerequisite for success of UNOSOM II's humanitarian and reconstruction mission; notes shift from relief to long-term rehabilitation of Somalia; intends to visit region in next week.

+ United States pays $533 million in assessed contributions to United Nations, reducing outstanding dues to $472 million; contributions outstanding from all Member States total $1.7 billion.

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The Security Council decided last night to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) for an initial six months, to assist in the implementation of the Peace Agreement signed last August by the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) in Arusha, Tanzania. In unanimously adopting resolution 872 (1993), the Council authorized the Mission to monitor observance of the cease-fire; to monitor security towards the end of the transitional government's mandate; to contribute to the security of the city of Kigali; to monitor the repatriation of refugees; and to assist in the coordination of humanitarian activities.

The Council invited the Secretary-General to consider ways of reducing UNAMIR's maximum strength, particularly through phased deployment, without affecting its capacity to carry out its mandate. The Council asked him to

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report on UNAMIR's progress after the initial deployment and said it would review the need for further deployment on the basis of that report. It also approved the Secretary-General's proposal that the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) be integrated into UNAMIR. The new Mission's mandate will end after national elections and the establishment of a new government, scheduled to occur by October 1995, but no later than December 1995.

The resolution urged the parties to implement the Arusha Agreement in good faith and demanded that they take all appropriate steps to ensure the security and safety of the operation and its personnel.

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Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, President of Rwanda, told the General Assembly today that the United Nations was the last hope for all peoples, and that its successes nurtured hope. He expressed satisfaction at recent developments in Cambodia, South Africa and the Middle East, and called on the international community to redouble its efforts to resolve the situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Angola and Somalia. To improve the lot of mankind, the international community must also promote the creation of a new international economic order, so as to tackle global structural imbalances, he said. International cooperation demanded intense, transparent and precise action, shared responsibility, and the right for all sides to make mistakes.

Rwanda was emerging from three years of unjust and pointless war, he continued. The war had ended as a result of international solidarity as well as of the will of the two parties involved. Several States and two international organizations -- the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations -- had played a major role in the peace process, which had concluded with the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in August. The war had caused major humanitarian problems. People had been displaced, education had been disrupted and crops had been neglected, resulting in famine. National reconciliation was now a priority. He expressed thanks for the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), and said that the country's recovery would depend on the generosity of the international community.

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The Prime Minister of Thailand, Chuan Leekpai, told the General Assembly this morning that in order to construct a new regional order of peace, harmony and prosperity, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were intensifying efforts among themselves and with neighbours and friends from outside the region. ASEAN was in a singular position to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in Southeast Asia, he said, particularly in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization with a solid track record such as ASEAN could compensate for the weaknesses each organization might suffer by itself.

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The international settlement of the Cambodian problem, he said, meant that for the first time in recent memory the region was free of armed conflict. He congratulated the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) on organizing the massive repatriation of Cambodian refugees from Thailand and the elections that resulted in a democratic Government. Thailand had cooperated with the United Nations from the outset in the efforts to rehabilitate Cambodia, he said, and pledged its friendship and cooperation with the new Government as it embarked on the path of nation-building.

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Tom Kijiner, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands, told the General Assembly this morning that the problems facing the world today required fundamental changes in the thinking of nations and of all mankind. Superpower confrontation had been replaced by many intricate problems, and the United Nations must be carefully reevaluated to ensure its effectiveness in dealing with them. He expressed support for the creation of an office of inspector-general, and said his country would continue to closely examine proposals for the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. He also supported the creation of an office of high commissioner for human rights.

The Foreign Minister called attention to the special situation of island nations, and said that islanders had, throughout history, displayed a remarkable degree of innovation and adaptability. Despite the end of the arms race, the world still had to confront the problems of nuclear testing and the dismantling of nuclear weapons. He welcomed the nuclear testing moratorium, and said he was greatly distressed that it had been broken by one of the nuclear Powers. He appealed to the other nuclear Powers not to follow that party, and said the Marshall Islands would work for a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. The problem might be addressed at its source by prohibiting the production of weapons-grade plutonium. The Marshall Islands was very pleased to have had been accepted as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last week, and looked forward to contributing to its work, he added.

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Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister for Foreign Affairs, told the General Assembly today that the current session had extraordinary significance because of the critical issues being considered. The world was undergoing a remarkable transformation with the end of the East-West confrontation. However, it had not become more stable because of such problems of violent nationalism, ethnic cleansing, and the gap between developed and developing countries. It was unfortunate that increased interdependence had coincided with increased political fragmentation, he said, and it was incumbent upon all to develop new strategies to deal with those problems for the sake of peace and security.

In building the post-cold war world, he continued, Bahrain advocated: agreement on new visions concerning the issues of peace and development; the

establishment of appropriate criteria for world stability through common security; respect for the boundaries between States, and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means agreed upon by the parties concerned; and support for the United Nations as the appropriate tool for the establishement of a new international order. He also stressed the importance of preventive diplomacy and the preventive deployment of United Nations forces to defuse tensions. The composition of the Security Council should be reviewed with a view to equitable geographic representation and a permanent seat for the Arab group. He went on to say that the recent Accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had given rise to hopes for peace in the Middle East and a just solution to the Palestine question. He also looked forward to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

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Josef Zieleniec, the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, said in the general debate today that though the division of Czechoslovakia was regrettable, great effort had been made to carry out the separation peacefully. Not a single window pane was broken in the process, he said, and the experience showed that good will and common sense could lead to peaceful settlement even of problems traditionally accompanied by violence and terror. Referring to Bosnia and Herzegovina, he described as odious the enforced coincidence of statehood with ethnicity. Ethnic and religious purity were concepts from another age, he said, irrelevant in the modern world.

Politically, the Czech Republic was constructing a democratic regime and its human rights record and robust press freedom had been recognized "even by very finicky non-partisan international organizations", he said. Economically, it had also chalked up successes. "We live within our means," he stated. His country did not seek to siphon off scarce development resources from countries in a worse situation and sought trade, not aid. Open markets would benefit both the developed and the developing, those that were settled and those in transition. For that reason, he said, the successful conclusion of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay round would benefit everyone.

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Wong Kan Seng, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, told the General Assembly today that the composition of the Security Council was a compromise between the principle of the sovereign equality of States and the realities of power politics. All States were equal, but some had a disproportionate influence on international life. Only the great Powers could make a decisive difference when action was needed, but the great must seek the mandate of the many for action to command a general consensus. In considering whether to increase the number of permanent seats on the Council, it was necessary to decide what configuration of international power should be reflected in their distribution, and who belonged in "the new elite", he said.

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The United States had won the cold war, but its economic recovery had been slow and its competitiveness had been blunted, he continued. The Russian Federation had serious economic and political difficulties but was a great military power. Japan and Germany were economic powerhouses, but lacked a consensus on the use of military forces beyond their borders. For the Council to reflect the current international distribution of power, some States would have to be relegated from the elite. He proposed that the Assembly form a working group to formulate criteria for the Council's expansion. He suggested that the veto power be retained, but that two vetoes be required to block a resolution in an expanded Council, in order to minimise misuse. Permanent members should each pay at least 9 per cent of United Nations operating expenses and 11 per cent of peace-keeping costs. They should also be ready to place their military forces at the Organization's disposal and to "shed blood", if necessary, to uphold international order, he said.

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The Foreign Minister of Bhutan, Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, told the General Assembly today that despite the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action in 1990, in the past three years per capita incomes in the least developed countries had fallen. Those countries had begun to initiate bold and painful structural reforms, but budget constraints in donor nations and competing claims on aid resources had continued to slow down the flow of official development assistance to them. While expressing his country's gratitude to donors who had met and even exceeded targets for such assistance, he appealed to others to follow suit, so that reforms could be sustained.

He went on to say that the United Nations could not remain unchanged and still be able to fulfill the hopes and expectations of its 184 Members in a vastly changed world. Increasing cooperation among the Members after the end of the cold war had made it possible for the Organization to become more effective, but its long-term success would depend on how democratic it became in its functioning and to what extent it involved all its Members, large and small, in the decision-making process. The United Nations should become, he concluded, the centrepiece of a more just and equitable world order, speaking for the whole of humanity rather than just for a privileged few.

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The Foreign Minister of Brunei Darussalam, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, called this afternoon for clear progress in strenthening linkages between the North and South, and the creation of conditions which promoted cooperation and growth. Speaking in the general debate, he said existing mechanisms needed to be improved to prevent economic disagreements from turning into open conflict. Each nation had a responsibility for promoting fair trading arrangements throughout the world.

The United Nations achieved its greatest successes, the Prince continued, when the special responsibilities of national Governments, non-governmental organizations and regional associations were recognized and agreed upon before the world body was asked to take action. When those responsibilities clashed,

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as in Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Organization's effectiveness was hindered. The success of the humanitarian operations in those countries, and the fact that those conflicts had not spread beyond the regions, should not divert attention from the deep matters of principle involved. The United Nations Charter would be severely compromised, he warned, if the Organization became a party to any arrangement which forced a sovereign nation to submit to aggression. That would not only condone terrorism, he said; it would reward it.

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Arturo Fajardo Maldonado, Guatemala's Foreign Minister, told the General Assembly yesterday that the interruption and reintroduction of constitutional order in his country earlier this year had allowed the Guatemalan people to defend their rights and to consolidate their political stability purely within the context of constitutional processes. He said a "national peace plan" would seek to establish a dialogue among all Guatemalans, including those associated with the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).

International support would be needed to facilitate the demobilization of the URNG, he continued. He called on the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) to strengthen their presence in Guatemala and to provide technical cooperation for protecting and defending human rights in the country. In Central America, he said, regional political advances had been stimulated by regular meetings of the region's Presidents. At the end of October, Guatemala would host such a summit, at which they would adopt the Protocol to the General Treaty on Economic Integration, an instrument which sought to consolidate peace by stimulating social development.

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Song Won Ho, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that a steadfast commitment to independence enabled each country to safeguard its national dignity and rights, as well as maintain and consolidate international relationships on a sound basis. His country's commitment to independence and principled position had enabled it to advance along the road of socialism. He went on to say his Government had consistently subordinated everything to the goal of national reunification. Differences in ideologies, ideals and political systems existed within the nation, but they could be overcome without much difficulty. He stressed that the inter-Korean dialogue had made epoch-making progress.

The time was right to dissolve the "United Nations Forces Command" in south Korea and to replace the Korean Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement, he continued. The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula was another essential factor in building a durable peace and security. His Government remained committed to its consistent position of turning the peninsula into a nuclear-free, peaceful zone. It would not object to inspection of its own nuclear facilities, but only when impartiality was fully

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guaranteed, he said. Nuclear weapons deployed on the Korean peninsula and its surrounding regions should be dismantled. Without that solution, any talk about international nuclear non-proliferation and a worldwide nuclear disarmament was senseless.

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Diego Paredes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, said in the general debate yesterday that although United Nations action in response to the Gulf crisis had reaffirmed the principles of the inadmissibility of the forcible acquisition of territories, problems were today increasing in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. Nationalistic and xenophobic tendencies were on the rise and could be seen even in the very heart of Europe. "Europe is dying in Sarajevo", he said.

Turning to economic issues, he said it was important to promote sustainable development, as called for in "Agenda 21" of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Sources for finance for sustainable development also had to be consolidated. He went on to say that Ecuador attached particular importance to its relations with its neighbours and was taking steps to enhance and improve those relationships. The maintenance of peace should be a paramount concern. He called on Peru to join Ecuador in reaffirming the principle of non-use of force in their mutual relations, with a view to achieving an honourable solution to the differences between the two countries.

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Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Kenya's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said in the General Assembly yesterday that the brutal war in Bosnia, the destruction of Somalia and the protracted civil war in Angola confirmed the futility of force as a means of solving disputes. He said the continued presence of United Nations peace-keeping personnel in Somalia was critical for peace and security and asked for the reinforcement of of United Nations patrols along their common border, to help Kenyan security personnel scale down the flow of armed gangs and refugees into his country. The very heavy influx of Somali refugees into Kenya had had a devastating effect on ecologically fragile parts of his country, due to excessive cutting of trees for building and firewood.

He asked the United Nations and the donor community to assist Kenya with programmes for the rehabilitation of the physical and social infrastructure, as well as the restoration of the ecosystem in the region. Kenya welcomed progress towards ensuring the effectiveness of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as an important instrument for funding incremental costs related to the implementation of Agenda 21, he said. However, Kenya was concerned that financial resources for the implementation of the programme had fallen short. He also underlined the need to strengthen the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to enable it to participate effectively in implementing Agenda 21.

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Boris O. Shihmuradov, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan, said that success for his country, after its recent independence following seven long decades under Soviet control, required political and economic reforms. Turkmenistan had to wean itself from State-owned property and a foodstuffs-based economy. A multi-party system was also needed. Democratic reforms were necessary to avoid social upheavals and disruption of harmony in society. In solving military problems, his country took a neutral, non-interference stance. He said a new agreement with Iran had established a peaceful border between their two countries. Turkmenistan was also engaged in active dialogue with Afghanistan and had developed a regional railroad -- the first such in Afghanistan.

Although part of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Turkmenistan had roots in the Middle East. Thus, it was in a position to facilitate talks between the two regions, he continued. He said his country could become the seat for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) by setting up bilateral agreements which were the best means of cooperation. The European Community, with its multilateral agreements, could not be duplicated in the CIS, he said. However, cooperation would be based on consensus, as it was in the Community. He went on to say that the CIS needed a period of transition to achieve cooperative development.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali briefed the Security Council today on the situation in Somalia, and emphasized that security was a prerequisite for the success of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) in its mission of humanitarian relief and political reconstruction. He also emphasized the extent of the progress achieved so far, including the elimination of starvation, and noted that a shift was underway from relief to long-term rehabilitation, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The Secretary-General said progress had been made in achieving security throughout the country, except in southern Mogadishu. UNOSOM II had never achieved the military strength authorized by the Council, and was currently short some 8,000 or 9,000 troops. It also had a mandate to apprehend and punish those responsible for the attacks on United Nations peace-keepers on 5 June. He stressed that Somalia would never enjoy peace, security and reconstruction without the substantial disarmament of all the warlords. The Secretary-General later told correspondents that he would visit the region in the next week.

Addressing a press conference at Headquarters today, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations, Kofi Annan, stressed that UNOSOM II had not veered from its original objectives and had not focused entirely on dealing with General Mohamed Farah Aidid and the Somali National

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Alliance (SNA). Reconciliation and reconstruction were its priorities, but the international media had highlighted the situation in southern Mogadishu. Mr. Annan said he would leave for Somalia tomorrow to assess the situation on the ground and to show solidarity with United Nations personnel in the country.

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The United Nations yesterday received payments from the United States for assessed contributions totalling some $533 million, of which $233 million was for the regular budget and $300 million for peace-keeping operations. The payments reduced the United States' outstanding dues to some $472 million, comprising $284 million for the regular budget and $188 million for peace-keeping.

To date, contributions outstanding from all Member States total some $1.7 billion, comprising $536 million for the regular budget and $1.2 billion for peace-keeping operations.

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